



mucket

Actinonaias ligamentina

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Mollusca
Class: Bivalvia

Features

The mucket has a large shell that is oval or oblong. It is thick, usually heavy, and compressed to moderately "inflated." The anterior end is rounded and the posterior is bluntly pointed. A few fine ridges may be present in younger shells. The outside of the smooth shell is yellowish brown with numerous green rays. Large shells are dark brown with faint (or no) green rays. The inside of the shell is white, occasionally tinged with pink or salmon. It is iridescent toward the posterior end. The mucket may attain lengths up to seven inches.

Natural History

The mucket is found in medium to large rivers in gravel or mixed sand and gravel. This mussel historically was widespread and abundant in the Upper Mississippi River, but is now almost absent. Freshwater mussel distribution in Iowa is not well documented. They have an elaborate reproductive system. During spawning, males release sperm into the water. The sperm are drawn inside the female's shell, where they fertilize eggs in her body. The fertilized eggs develop into larvae (glochidia) and are

stored for a time in the female's gills. When the glochidia mature, the female generally expels them into the water where they must attach as parasites to the gills or fins of fish. Larvae remain on the host fish for a period of weeks or months. Young mussels then detach from their host and drop to the bottom of the body of water. Hosts for this mussel include 12 fish species, most widespread and common. Mussels are filter-feeders, bringing in water and the organic matter it contains through the incurrent siphon, filtering the particles out, then sending the rest of the water away from the body through the excurrent siphon. Particles filtered include plankton and detritus. Mature mussels spend most of their lives, which range from 10 to 100 years, partially or wholly buried in the bottom substrate.

Habitats

Mississippi River; interior rivers and streams

Iowa Status

uncommon; native

Iowa Range

eastern two-thirds of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.